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African American Chamber of Commerce

-- Good for Business, Good for Milwaukee

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January 13, 2010

Chairman Julius Genachowski
Commissioner Meredith Attwell Baker
Commissioner Mignon Clyburn
Commissioner Michael J. Copps
Commissioner Robert M. McDowell
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Chairman Genachowski, Commissioners Baker, Clyburn, Copps and McDowell:

We are writing to express concern about proposed regulations that would restrict the growth of the Internet and broadband adoption. Commonly known as "net neutrality", this new rule has the potential to negatively impact the African American business community and all those who rely on it.

We would be hard pressed to find a technological development that has yielded such benefits to small businesses as has the creation and expansion of the Internet. As you know, African American businesses are disproportionately smaller, and therefore will be disproportionately affected by any harm done to broadband growth. While we understand that this is not the intent of the proposed regulations, we are convinced that it would be the result.

Unfettered Internet growth has allowed thousands of minority businesses to sprout up all over America, in affluent areas as well as in poor communities. It allows us to offer products and services that we could not have just a decade ago and it has enabled us to bring true economic independence to countless individuals and families.

Yet, behind the seemingly spontaneous explosion in Internet use is an incredibly complex and expensive system that needs enormous amounts of capital and management. In recent years, network operators have made average investments of over \$50 billion annually and are constantly working to ensure that the system does not collapse under the weight of more intensive data streams.

While we strongly believe there is a compelling public interest in universal broadband, we also know that this can only be achieved through future investments in the system. We believe that the government's energies can best be used to promote the former through incentives for the latter. Whether or not the government pursues universal broadband



promotion actively, it should at least refrain from actions that would discourage investment in the Internet.

In conclusion, we would like to reiterate how critical broadband is for African American entrepreneurs, and for the economy as a whole. And we would urge you to give careful consideration to any moves that would regulate the Internet and limit its' potential.

Sincerely,


Wallace White
Chairman


Curtiss E. Harris
Executive Director